

71-15011

7 January 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Comments by Andrew Marshall
on the Intelligence Process

Attached is the letter from Andy Marshall which I mentioned at lunch on Monday. Andy makes a number of somewhat interrelated comments and recommendations which can be summarized as follows:

a. National Estimates. He suggests the need for a review of the estimating process to determine whether estimates are really responsive to the needs of decisionmakers and adequately synchronized with the process through which NSSMs are formulated. (He points out, correctly, that NSSMs function, to a certain degree, as intelligence documents.)

On the face of it, this is a startling proposal in view of the fact that Andy has been working just short of a year as a consultant to the White House on precisely this subject. The fact that he should write this letter at this time suggests, for one thing, that he has given up any hope of getting a reaction from Kissinger to his recommendations and is looking to you for some kind of playback. For another thing, the letter may reflect evidence of concern about the adequacy of intelligence support which Andy may have picked up around the White House.

In any event, his recommendation is the comparatively simple one that you talk to Henry and try to get some coherent statement from him about the real reaction in the NSC staff to intelligence support and, if there is any dissatisfaction with this support, specifically what Henry thinks the deficiencies really are.

I judge from our conversation Monday that there is no reason for confidence that a conversation with Henry will produce any very specific or helpful reaction. On the other hand, I think all would agree that the most serious deficiency

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in the intelligence process is the absence of feedback. No harm perhaps would be done by asking Henry once more for his reaction to 11-8. You could take the occasion to tell him that you are concerned with the necessity for making sure that an effective and continuing dialogue is carried on between the intelligence community and policymakers, and that you are prepared to appoint somebody from the Agency to work with whomever he cares to designate to see that arrangements exist or are developed to permit such a dialogue.

b. Reorientation of Collection Program. Andy suggests the need for re-examination of the priorities and objectives of intelligence given the existence of strategic parity between the U. S. and the Soviets and the attendant potentialities for rather broad-scale mischief-making throughout the non-Bloc world which may result from Soviet political and conventional military initiatives.

This problem is already in hand as a result of
[] study of priorities.

c. The Need for Expanded Intelligence Facilities.
Andy makes quite a point of the fact that the intelligence requirements are going to increase and become more complicated just at the time when budgetary cutbacks are bound to impose a squeeze on estimating as well as collection facilities. He points out the need for maintaining an appropriate balance between analytical and collection activities and also for outside support for adequate funds.

All of this goes without saying. Conceivably Andy might think up some better way of articulating our needs and developing the basis for a more persuasive case to the Office of Management and Budget and the Congress. I see no harm in talking to him about this, particularly as he has close friends in the OMB.

/s/ John A. Bross

JOHN A. BROSS
D/DCI/NIPE

Attachment

cc: DDCI
DD/I
D/ONE

RAND

10 December 1970

L-8940

Dear John:

(U) Here are a few thoughts you might consider passing on to Helms. I am not sure that they are any farther developed than a few evenings ago at your house. Perhaps being put down on paper they are more clearly stated and of more use to you. Let me say that if Dick wants to expand on what I have to say in the next few paragraphs, I would be delighted to talk with him, or to write a separate and longer piece on each of the two areas.

(S) As you will remember, I suggested two general areas that Dick might want to open up with Henry. The first of them would be the possible value of a systematic review of the way in which the Intelligence community now supports the National decision-making process. The notion here is that the NSSM process has been running for some time now and seems to be stabilized as a mode of operation. It has generated a new interface between the decisionmakers, their staffs, and the Intelligence community. In the meantime the national intelligence process leading to the NIE's continues to run along with some adjustments to respond better to the expressed desires of the top decisionmakers. It might, therefore, be useful to have an assessment of how the process is working; how it might be changed to better serve the top decisionmakers. There are a whole series of issues that would naturally arise in such a review. The future role of the Board of National Estimates. The role in the NSSM process of the new DIA estimates element. Possible changes in the interface between the decisionmakers and the community to improve communication of customer needs, and community capabilities.

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(U) How the assessment ought to be organized and conducted is not clear to me. Presumably some group should be formed to undertake the work of the assessment and come up with recommendations. You and Dick would have a much better idea about who ought to be represented.

(S) The second area for discussion seems to me to center around the problem of planning for the future evaluation of the Intelligence community, its progress, etc. The probable changing nature of U.S. foreign policy problems over the next decade suggests the need for appropriate planning of the Intelligence community to adapt. The Nixon doctrine, the Soviet break out of the close-in containment that we held them to for so long, on balance means that there probably is going to be a good deal more Soviet presence in the regions of the world between them and us. This may mean many smaller crises that we will have to deal with. To me, this suggests a change in collection priorities and in the relative importance of the clandestine services as contrasted to the technical collection systems.

(U) The objective in talking with Henry, would be to get him to focus on what he sees as the likely shift in foreign policy problems, and from there to proceed to a discussion of where, and in what direction the community should be moving.

(S) A second related problem area, in which I believe there is going to be a change, is the nature of the Intelligence estimates needed for the planning of our military forces, especially our strategic forces. In the past, we were spending a good deal more resources than the Soviets, and were far ahead of them in the strategic area. Thus we were able to use conservative estimating methods and buy forces to cover a variety of contingencies with high confidence. We are no longer in that position -- the Soviet strategic forces are as large as our own; the resources that they are putting into their strategic forces more nearly match our own; in general the competition we are getting is a lot stiffer. To my mind, this means that Intelligence is going to be much more important than it was in the past. We are going to have to do a more precise job of balancing the various risks, which can only be done well, if we take account of likely Soviet behavior in contrast to the hypothetical possibilities they might do which has dominated threat estimating methods. We will need to improve Intelligence estimating techniques for making projections of

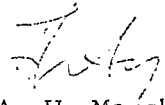
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Soviet military forces. In our defense planning we may have to adopt different practices in order to spend our money more wisely. They will involve more reliance, not only on improved forecasts, but probably on a willingness to wait until we have evidence that the Soviets have actually started to deploy or are near deploying particular items of weaponry before deploying our own systems. In other words, we may adopt a more adaptive approach that presumes short intelligence lead times, as well as improved insight into likely Soviet behavior with regard to the programming of its forces. The thing that concerns me, and is something that Dick might want to raise with Henry is that just when Intelligence is likely to become much more important, and much more valuable, we are faced with tighter budgets in the Intelligence Community. Moreover, in the allocation of resources within the Intelligence Community, there will be a continuing squeeze on the analysis and Intelligence estimating function, because of the high cost of future technical collection systems. Thus, careful attention to the balance of our expenditures in the Intelligence areas is indicated. Moreover, generating continuing support outside of the community for adequate funds is of great importance.

Sincerely,


A. W. Marshall

AWM:cc

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Remarks:

Per our conversation herewith a copy
of my memorandum to the Director on
Andy Marshall's letter.

[Signature Box]

JABross

FOLD HERE TO RETURN TO SENDER

FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.	DATE
John A. Bross, D/DCI/NIPE	1-7-71